



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2009

No. 145

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SERRANO).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

October 8, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOSÉ E. SERRANO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

Rev. Todd Jones, First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, before Whom generations rise and pass away, we give thanks today for this Nation, "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal," that all bear some mark of the Divine image. So bless this body of legislators with wisdom and a passion "to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with Thee."

Guide and direct their work, O Lord, that it may bring blessing and honor to this land and lead to an increase of freedom, a deepening of joy, and enrich the health and welfare of all her citizens. Grant that a large-hearted and clear-minded spirit may prevail and that our Nation's common good may be served and strengthened by the actions of this body.

Establish this Nation in righteousness, O God, and grant that we may be makers of peace, artisans of goodness, and keepers of the bright light of freedom.

We pray this in the name of the Living God, the Creator and Redeemer of all that is or ever shall be.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. GRIFFITH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GRIFFITH led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1037. An act direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a five-year pilot project to test the feasibility and advisability of expanding the scope of certain qualifying work-study activities under title 38, United States Code.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 942. An act to prevent abuse of Government charge cards.

WELCOMING REV. TODD JONES, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Tennessee, Congressman COOPER, is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome to the Chamber today Rev. Dr. Todd Jones and his wife,

Connie. Dr. Jones is the reverend at the First Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He has led that congregation since 2002. He is a native of Pennsylvania who was educated at the University of Pittsburgh and went on to get his degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. After that, he did a 1-year fellowship in Scotland at the University of Edinburgh.

He first pastored at churches in South Carolina, where he had attended Presbyterian College. We feel very graced to have his presence in Nashville, Tennessee. He does a superb job, and he is very active in the community.

For example, he is on the board of the Boy Scouts as well as Goodwill Industries. So we are very thankful for his leading this body in prayer today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

MISSILE DEFENSE DECISIONS

(Mr. GRIFFITH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the American people about the current situation in the Middle East. On September 28, Iran launched and tested a Shahab-3 missile which has a range of 1,200 kilometers and puts American soldiers and our allies in the Middle East in danger. These tests must be met with stern opposition.

Having recently returned from Israel and Egypt, I had the opportunity to meet with officials and members of the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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defense community who are directly involved in their missile defense decisions. I was able to see firsthand the stability and security that American missile systems provide for our allies. Recently, the administration announced a change of plans, eliminating missile silos in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic, which raised concerns both in our missile defense community and among our international allies. Clearly this logic must be questioned as a successful launch of the long-range Shahab-3 missile shows that we must protect our allies in the region and, most importantly, the eastern United States.

These Iranian tests demonstrate a need for ground-based interceptors, if not on Poland, then on the eastern coast of the United States. American safety and security is essential to our soldiers abroad and citizens at home. Because national defense is a non-partisan issue, we in Congress will work together to make sure our decisions are well thought out and executed.

OPEN UP THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, in October 2008, just a year ago, Congress lifted the decades-long ban on energy exploration off America's coasts, clearing the way for expanded domestic oil and gas exploration. Unfortunately, instead of moving forward with a plan to explore the Outer Continental Shelf, this administration has stopped progress by instituting an extended 6-month public comment period.

Now the Obama administration has indicated offshore exploration may not happen until 2012, meaning what was a mere 6-month delay for comments has now become 3-year ban or could become a 3-year ban on offshore drilling.

Mr. Speaker, Americans are still waiting for expanded oil and gas exploration. With unemployment nearing 10 percent and our Nation's deficit topping \$9 trillion, it is simply irresponsible to continue this de facto ban on American energy protection. We need to take an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to our energy portfolio, an approach which includes developing American offshore energy resources.

HEALTH CARE STATUS QUO IS UNAFFORDABLE

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Since 2000, families in Pennsylvania have seen a 100 percent increase in their health premiums. Nearly one in five Pennsylvania families pay more than 10 percent of their

income on health care. This is simply unaffordable for middle class Americans.

As we advance health care reform, we must ensure that Americans have access to meaningful, affordable health coverage, and we can do that by expanding private and public insurance options available to individuals and small groups so meaningful coverage is more affordable; by establishing consumer protections, including ending preexisting condition exclusions; setting commonsense policies to expand options for insurance coverage, including allowing young adults to stay on their parents' insurance policy; ensuring that Americans know what their insurance coverage truly means, by eliminating confusing terminology which results in consumers paying for expenses that they thought were covered, and putting a reasonable limit on insurer overhead and profits so that more of our premium dollars are used on health care.

The status quo is unaffordable. That is why the President and Congress are committed to passing a health care reform that benefits all of us.

ROBERT CLENNEY—TEXAS LAWMAN

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Highlands, Texas, lost a lawman to a tragic traffic collision last Saturday night. Harris County Precinct 3 Deputy Constable Robert Clenney was hit by a car from behind and spun into oncoming traffic where he again was hit head-on by a pickup truck. He was 38 years of age. To make matters worse, the driver who hit Deputy Clenney's SUV from behind fled the scene. Police are now searching for the hit-and-run scoundrel.

Deputy Clenney was a beloved husband and father of two young daughters. His wife, Denise, says her husband had always wanted to be a lawman. It was his dream, and he achieved that dream. He had been a deputy constable for 11 months when he lost his life.

Lawmen are a special breed of people. They run toward trouble when others are running to safety. They protect people, property and the community. These first responders hold evildoers accountable to our laws. Deputy Clenney will be buried this Saturday in Texas. We will always be grateful for folks like Deputy Clenney, grateful for his service and his sacrifice. We pray God's peace to his family after their loss of this Texas lawman.

And that's just the way it is.

YOUNG ADULT HEALTH CARE COVERAGE ACT

(Mrs. DAHLKEMPER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak on behalf of the

age group that boasts the highest uninsured rate in our country, our young adults. Young adults, those between 19 and 29 years old, are more frequently without insurance than any other age group. At 31 percent uninsured, nearly one in three 18- to 29-year-olds are without health insurance. This gap in coverage occurs when young people graduate from school or reach an age limit imposed by insurance companies that do not allow them access to their parents' health insurance plans.

Young adults entering the workforce often take jobs that lack benefits or cannot afford them on their own. The Young Adult Health Care Coverage Act would give these young adults access to their parents' health insurance during these transition years when it is so difficult to maintain coverage on their own. This bill is a no-cost bipartisan solution to the problem of young adults without health insurance.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and to support health care reform to provide quality health care for all Americans.

FANG ZHENG

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the honor to celebrate with Fang Zheng, a man from China who recently walked for the first time in 20 years. Twenty years ago, I remember the whole world was watching on TV with such hope as peaceful demonstrators poured into Tiananmen Square in China, calling for freedom. Fang was among those brave activists. When the tanks rolled in to break up the demonstration, one of them rolled over him, causing him to lose both of his legs. This young man, who had been an Olympic hopeful, was now wheelchair-bound.

Last year he finally was able to travel to the United States and seek asylum. Moved by his story, the owners of a prosthesis center that worked with wounded war veterans offered to design him new legs; and yesterday here in the Capitol, these new legs allowed him to dance with his wife for the first time ever.

That celebration was a powerful symbol that the American people have not forgotten the Chinese struggle for freedom and the courage of people like Fang Zheng who speak out and who long to enjoy the same freedoms we hold so dear. You can see his story on YouTube.

THE NEED FOR A HEALTH CARE PUBLIC OPTION

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to congratulate the American people on how savvy and smart they